



Tuberculosis and HIV

What happens when a person has both TB and HIV?

When a person's immune system is damaged, TB infection may become "active" and cause TB disease. TB disease is an AIDS-defining illness for HIV-infected persons.

Like many other infections, TB is more serious in someone with HIV:

- When healthy people get a TB infection, only one out of 10 will get TB disease in his/her lifetime.
- When HIV-infected persons get infected with the TB germ, one out of three persons will get TB disease within one year.

The TB skin test may be falsely negative when a person has both TB and HIV because the immune system is damaged by HIV. A person who has HIV should be evaluated for TB as soon as possible after HIV infection is diagnosed.

To ensure effective therapy, people who have both HIV and TB infection will need to get TB preventive treatment by directly observed preventive therapy (DOPT). DOPT is where county health department staff observe the patient swallowing TB medications at an agreed upon time and place.

Should I be concerned about getting TB from someone who is HIV infected?

A person with TB disease can spread TB infection to others, whether they have HIV or not. The person with TB and AIDS cannot spread TB infection more easily than someone with TB disease alone. However, HIV-infected persons are more likely to develop TB disease if they become infected with TB.

What are "atypical TB germs"?

Atypical TB germs are germs similar to the TB germ but infection with them cannot be spread from person to person. These germs are acquired from dust, water, food, milk or from certain animals by breathing in particles or ingesting germs or by contaminating a cut in the skin. These germs can cause disease in people with HIV infection or AIDS.